

Did you check our on-line comments ? :) !

Used to have a fish, a crazy fish, that compulsively built piles of aquarium rocks by hauling rocks in its mouth from one side of the tank to the other. We named it (didn't know boy or girl?) Sisyphish. It didn't play well w/ the other fish.

Lots of institutional synapses connecting here.


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<http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/watershed/sfbay-delta/index.html>

-----Tim Vendlinski/R9/USEPA/US wrote: -----

To: Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov
From: Tim Vendlinski/R9/USEPA/US
Date: 07/13/2011 09:25AM
Cc: Erin Foresman/R9/USEPA/US@EPA, Karen Jurist/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Subject: Re: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

Sisyphus indeed! I checked our docket for FWS comments.
Jennifer Norris signed a letter on 04/25/11 that urges EPA to control and reduce MeHg production in partnership with the State of California's on implementing the mercury TMDL (of course, there's more than one mercury TMDL for the Bay Delta ecosystem).
FWS does not focus on source control, but I think source control would be inherently part of the TMDL approach. Your letter *does* recommend advancing the Delta methylmercury TMDL while simultaneously advancing wetlands restoration, and I'm happy to say our agencies are on the same page with that recommendation. I'm working like heck to get some money over to USGS so we can test new water treatment methods for sequestering MeHg in the process of restoring peat-based wetlands on Twitchell Island. I'll keep you apprised. Best, Tim

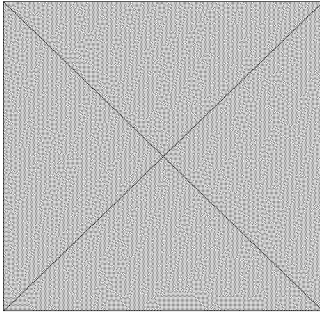
 Janet_Whitlock---07/12/2011 06:22:02 PM---Hi Tim. Because I did not weigh in on the comments submitted by FWS, they likely

From: Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov
To: Tim Vendlinski/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Cc: Erin Foresman/R9/USEPA/US@EPA, Karen Jurist/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 07/12/2011 06:22 PM
Subject: Re: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

Hi Tim.

Because I did not weigh in on the comments submitted by FWS, they likely did not comment on source control, thus my question regarding comments from other parties.

The coordination between Water and Superfund programs is critical in dealing with these issues and I am very happy to know you are talking to each other.



Thank you again for your hard work. Take Care.

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To Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov

Tim Vendlinski
<Vendlinski.Tim@epamail.epa.gov>
cc Karen Jurist <Jurist.Karen@epamail.epa.gov>, Erin Foresman
<Foresman.Erin@epamail.epa.gov>

07/12/2011 03:05 PM

Subject Re: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

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Hi Janet: Yes, I'm aware that FWS submitted comments, but my sweep through the comments has been less thorough than my colleagues (e.g., Erin Foresman, Karen Schwinn). I'll double-check what Mr. Maurer wrote; I know he's served as your contaminant expert for many years. I look forward to working with you on challenges and opportunities. Best, Tim

From: Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov
To: Tim Vendlinski/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Cc: Karen Jurist/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 07/12/2011 05:56 PM
Subject: Re: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

Hi Tim,

I was just talking to Tom Maurer here about FWS comments on the ANPR. I was not aware of it in February but understand that FWS submitted comments. This is a huge effort by EPA and I'm glad you are working on this. I assume you received comments regarding source control from other parties?

Please let me know if I can help in any way.

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To Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov

cc Karen Jurist <Jurist.Karen@epamail.epa.gov>

Tim Vendlinski <Vendlinski.Tim@epamail.epa.gov>

Subject Re: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

07/12/2011 02:23 PM

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Hi Janet:

Last February, we issued an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) for the Bay Delta (see link), and now we're "responding" to the comments we received in a Response Document. That's what this whole exercise has been about.

<http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/watershed/sfbay-delta/index.html>

It has been quite important for me to learn about the good work you're doing with Karen Jurist.

Stay Tuned, Tim

From: Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov
To: Tim Vendlinski/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Cc: Karen Jurist/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 07/12/2011 04:38 PM
Subject: Re: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

Hi Tim,

Thank you for the update. Yes, the MeHg problem is pervasive throughout the Delta and you will likely find "methylation factories" where ever you find wetlands. I'm not sure what the "response document" is that you refer to below.

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To Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov

cc Karen Jurist <Jurist.Karen@epamail.epa.gov>

Subject Re: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

Tim Vendlinski <Vendlinski.Tim@epamail.epa.gov>

07/12/2011 01:18 PM

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Hi Janet:

I'm sorry for my delayed reply.

Based on the research I've been doing and conversations with scientists and decision-makers, I decided the wetlands section in EPA's "Response Document" needs to address the MeHg issue well beyond the Cache Creek Settling Basin, Yolo Bypass, and Cache Slough. We're facing similar problems with Dutch Slough and the Marsh Creek Reservoir (inputs from Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine), the Southern Delta (inputs from the SJ River that originate in the Diablo Range), and the Central/Western Delta (inputs from the Gold Rush and modern air deposition related to industry).

Therefore, I broadened the language to afford EPA, other agencies, and private parties to work in several priority locations. The "program review" that introduces the wetlands section is bound to be controversial (especially with the Corps and NRCS), so I'm waiting for my supervisor to return from the East Coast before I circulate our proposed actions to other agencies and NGOs for preliminary review.

Thanks so much for your patience.

Best Regards, Tim

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~~~~~  
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From: Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov
To: Tim Vendlinski/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 07/08/2011 07:04 PM
Subject: EPA's plans in the Delta and Cache Creek watershed

Tim,

I'm wondering how this is going, what actions you presented to the management team and the direction EPA plans to take the coming year.

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----- Forwarded by Janet Whitlock/SAC/R1/FWS/DOI on 07/08/2011 02:52 PM -----

To Vendlinski.Tim@epamail.epa.gov

cc Jurist.Karen@epamail.epa.gov, Riley.Gary@epamail.epa.gov

Subject Re: New idria/Panoche vs Cache Creek watershed [Link](#)

Janet Whitlock/SAC/R1/FWS/DOI

05/31/2011 12:24 PM

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Thanks Tim,

I've focused in on the Cache Creek Settling Basin during discussion with staff from Superfund, because they must focus on areas where one can take action, particularly engineering actions. It seems to me that it would make sense to evaluate if something can be done at the settling basin through a thorough feasibility study, particularly if a thorough remedial investigation can link contamination from mining activities by large companies to contaminants there. Thus Superfund might be able to bring deep pockets to task to cut off the flow of Hg from the hose into the bypass from this source.

All too often we are privy to info that makes it difficult to blissfully enjoy the resources we work to protect. The old adage rings true: Ignorance is bliss!

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To Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov

cc Jurist.Karen@epamail.epa.gov, Riley.Gary@epamail.epa.gov

Subject Re: New idria/Panoche vs Cache Creek watershed

Vendlinski.Tim@epamail.epa.gov

05/31/2011 10:43 AM

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Thanks, Janet. I look forward to reading these materials.

I drafted some proposed actions for the review of Karen, Gary, and our emergency response team.

Once I hear back from Superfund, I'll revise the actions for presentation to my management team in the Water Division.

Ecologists and policy-makers who want to restore wetlands in the Delta are zeroed-in on "Cache Slough" a waterbody just west of Prospect/Liberty islands in the southern Yolo Bypass. As you probably know, this feature is entirely separate from the "Cache Creek Settling Basin" some 30+ miles north for which you've raised concern.

Nevertheless, the Settling Basin appears to be the last stop for mercury before it enters the northern part of the Yolo Bypass, and therefore might constitute a significant risk factor for all the birds and fishes that seasonally use the Bypass.

I was up in Sacramento over the weekend, and the wetlands and freshly plowed rice patties in the Bypass looked so idyllic in the afternoon sun.

Sometimes I wish I didn't read so much ;-).

All the Best, Tim

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~~~~~

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From: Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov
To: Tim Vendlinski/R9/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 05/25/2011 02:16 PM
Subject: New idria/Panoche vs Csche

FYI,

Nice talking to you Tim. Good luck in your new endeavors at EPA.

----- Forwarded by Janet Whitlock/SAC/R1/FWS/DOI on 05/25/2011 11:14 AM -----

To <Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov>

cc:

Subject Re: Fw: Superfund and Brownfields News Release (Region 9): U.S. EPA Proposes to Add Northern, Central California Hazardous Waste Sites to Superfund's National Priorities List

"Chris Foe"
<cfoe@waterboards.ca.gov>

03/21/2011 11:14 AM

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Janet, Feel free to pass the email around. I am very confident about the numbers I quoted from the various reports. chris

>>> <Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov> 3/18/2011 5:00 PM >>>

Hi Chris,

Do you mind if I pass your e-mail around? I would like to send it to the site listing branch at EPA in particular.

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To <Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov>

cc

Subject Re: Fw: Superfund and Brownfields News Release (Region 9): U.S. EPA Proposes to Add Northern, Central California Hazardous Waste Sites to Superfund's National Priorities List

"Chris Foe"
<cfoe@waterboards.ca.gov>

03/18/2011 02:27 PM

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Janet, Always nice to hear from you. In answer to your question, the two systems are not comparable. The Regional Board has measured both total and methyl mercury in major streams throughout the Central Valley to determine sources, fate and transport. Two reports were produced, one for inorganic and the second for methyl mercury. They can both be downloaded from the Moss Landing Marine Laboratory web site <http://mercury.mlml.calstate.edu/reports/reports/>

I have never been to New Idria mine but hear that it is a nasty local problem. However, our data suggest that little to none of its waste gets to the delta. I am told that New Idria drains to the San Joaquin River through Salt Slough. Table 4 of the inorganic mercury report estimates that annual inorganic mercury loads in Salt Slough at Hwy 165 are 10.6 +/- 2 kg/yr (mean plus minus 95% confidence limits). The same table also calculates inorganic loads into and out of the Cache Creek Settling Basin. They are 323 +/- 140 Kg/yr and 110 +/- 63 kg/yr. Remember that the Settling Basin is a major sink for mercury and sediment from the Cache Creek Drainage. The Settling Basin is filling up and there does not seem to be any plan to dredge or build a replacement. So the whole inorganic mercury load will be delivered to the Yolo Bypass and Delta in about 10 years.

The production and export of methyl mercury is more important as that is the form of mercury that bioaccumulates in fish and is a developmental neurotoxin. Table 17 of the methylmercury report suggests that Salt Slough exports 4.4 +/- 1 gm of methyl mercury per month. Determining the production and export of methyl mercury from Cache Creek is more complicated because it discharges to all the wildlife wetlands in the Yolo bypass. I think we have good estimates of methyl mercury production in the bypass when dry and flooded. the bypass appears to be making about 40 percent of all the methyl mercury produced in the Sacramento Valley when acting as a flood conveyance system, like it is today after our last rains. Production estimates can be as much as 40 g per day or ten times the total annual production from Salt slough. Of course, that methylmercury is being produced from the inorganic mercury previously deposited by Cache and Putah Creeks in the wetlands in the bypass. The saddest fact is that the State continues to plan and build more seasonal and permanent wetlands as part of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan in the Bypass without any real plan for controlling the production and export of methylmercury. chris

>>> <Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov> 3/9/2011 11:57 AM >>>

Hey Chris,

Any idea how much Hg Cache contributes to the system compared with Panoche/New Idria?

Janet Whitlock

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----- Forwarded by Janet Whitlock/SAC/R1/FWS/DOI on 03/09/2011 11:55 AM -----

"McKinley, Charles" <Chuck.Mckinley@sol.doi.gov>, "Whitlock, Janet"

To <Janet_Whitlock@fws.gov>

cc

Subject FW: Superfund and Brownfields News Release (Region 9): U.S. EPA Proposes to
Add Northern, Central California Hazardous Waste Sites to Superfund's
National Priorities List

"Demarest, Chip"

<Chip_Demarest@ios.doi.gov>

03/08/2011 01:06 PM

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Chuck, Janet,
You might be interested in this. It looks like New Idria Mine, which was looked at years ago for
NRDAR, is being proposed for the NPL. I don't have any knowledge about Blue Ledge Mine.

Chip

From: U.S. EPA [<mailto:usaepa@govdelivery.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2011 11:58 AM

To: Demarest, Chip

Subject: Superfund and Brownfields News Release (Region 9): U.S. EPA Proposes to
Add Northern, Central California Hazardous Waste Sites to Superfund's National Priorities

List

To view and/or download photos of these sites please visit:

http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/r09_2011-3-8_toxic_sites_california.

For Immediate Release: March 8, 2011

Media Contacts: Mary Simms, simms.mary@epa.gov (415) 947-4270, Nahal Mogharabi, (415) 947-4307, mogharabi.nahal@epa.gov, or Rusty Harris-Bishop, (415) 972-3140, harris-bishop.rusty@epa.gov

U.S. EPA Proposes to Add Northern, Central California Hazardous Waste Sites to Superfund's National Priorities List

Two abandoned mines make the list of the nation's worst toxic sites

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to add two abandoned mines that discharge toxic pollutants to California waterways to the Superfund National Priorities List. Superfund is the federal program that investigates and cleans up the most complex, uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites in the country that pose risks to human health and the environment.

The New Idria Mercury Mine site located in San Benito County, affects waterways leading to the San Joaquin River and San Francisco Bay. Blue Ledge Mine in Siskiyou County discharges into streams in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and ultimately the Applegate Reservoir, a popular recreation area.

"Abandoned mines have left behind a toxic legacy that continues to threaten the health of people and natural resources of California," said Jane Diamond, Director of the EPA's regional Superfund program. "Listing these two sites will enable the EPA to reduce risks to the environment and ensure protection of important water resources."

New Idria is an abandoned mercury mine located approximately 64 miles southeast of Hollister, CA. Past mining operations have resulted in mercury contamination and acid mine drainage in San Carlos Creek, Silver Creek and a portion of Panoche Creek, at levels toxic to aquatic organisms. Environmental impacts extend more than fifteen miles to creeks and wetland areas, endangered species habitat, and ultimately the San Joaquin River and the San Francisco Bay. The Blue Ledge Mine is located on privately owned land surrounded by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, approximately three miles south of the Oregon-California border. Copper, cadmium, other metals, and acid mine drainage from past copper and zinc mining operations have contaminated sediments and surface water at levels that are toxic to aquatic organisms. Impacts include the absence of fish for more than three miles downstream and

potential negative impacts to fisheries all the way to the Applegate Reservoir, nearly eight miles downstream.

In 2006 the EPA performed an emergency response action to stabilize waste rock that was releasing into Joe Creek, just downstream from Blue Ledge Mine. In 2010, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) received \$12.4 million in American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds plus \$1.4 million from the ASARCO Environmental Trust to place the waste rock into an on-site repository. This work began last summer.

To date, there have been 1,627 sites listed on the NPL since 1980, 128 of which are in California. Nationally, cleanup is underway or complete at 1100 of the 1627 sites.

With all Superfund sites, EPA tries to identify and locate the parties potentially responsible for the contamination. For sites without financially viable potentially responsible parties, listing makes the sites eligible for federal funds that will enable completion of the cleanup.

For the Federal Register notice and supporting documents, please visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/current.htm>.

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